Homey Touches

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by SaitouLover

Summary

"Seriously?" Will asked. "Why are there so many choices? Can't you just pick a color and be done with it?"

"No."

Will sighed before petting BG's dark curls in an absent manner. "I don't like this."

"Duly noted," the older man said before moving deeper into the aisles.

Notes

This is not A/B/O. Here, it’s normal for men to be able to carry as well... just far less common. I’m thinking that for every 1000 female pregnancies there’s one male pregnancy. Enough that it would turn some heads but not enough to be considered freakish. Heterosexual pregnancies are still the overwhelming majority because the majority of men who can carry are straight. It can take people by surprise because men don’t have external menstruation like women.

Will grew up in a time and place where it wasn’t openly acceptable, and so doctors and schools didn’t screen for the ability. Things have changed since then but Will never felt the need to get himself checked.

Hannibal turned towards Will and sighed when he saw the younger man halfway down the aisle, staring at the lower-end stone that was plastered on the wall. Will caught the sound, a tired thing full of suffering, and rolled his eyes at it. Whilst the psychiatrist reluctantly made his way over, Will contemplated the options before tapping two in quick succession.

He glanced down at the baby strapped to his chest. "What do you think, BG? The white or the grey?"

"Neither," Hannibal chimed in.

"Hush, Hannibal. You already had your turn."

"And I still think steel is the best option."

Will shook his head. "And I said 'no'. I don't want a cold kitchen. I've already agreed to let you pick out the appliances, because God forbid you don't get your oven warmer and panini press. Now be quiet and let me chose the countertop."

"Again, steel is more hygienic with a child in the house."

"No," Will repeated. He looked his two choices over before tapping the white option. "This one. Besides, I like the way the quartz looks. It'll go nice against the cupboards."

"Teal," the doctor complained under his breath. "Honestly, it will clash with the living room."

The empath sighed in exasperation. "The living room is on the other end of the house. And I told you, I am not letting you design my kitchen, Hannibal."

"There is absolutely nothing wrong with my kitchen," the older man groused.

Will turned bodily to face the doctor and raised an eyebrow. "Your kitchen looks like a morgue. With as much time you devote to cooking, BG is not spending half her childhood in a morgue."

Hannibal pursed his lips but stayed silent, knowing when and when not to push.

Will nodded to himself and then pulled a small notebook out of the baby carrier he was wearing. He flipped it open and jotted down the quartz material information before moving on to the wood section, remembering how Hannibal had insisted on a chopping block or at least a large cutting board for the counter. There were literally dozens of choices and Will sighed in frustration.

"Seriously, why are there so many options? Wood is wood."

Hannibal snorted in his throat, a muffled sound that the younger man chose to ignore, before he leaned forward and tapped a particular block of red. "This one, in a natural finish."

Will gave in and wrote it down before moving on, allowing the doctor the small victory. They slowly ambled through the store, ignoring the lurking salesmen as they went, Hannibal remembering enough from his own kitchen remodel to guide Will through the process at a high level. It had been suggested by Celeste's decorator that Will get an idea for what he was looking for before they talked about layout and function, so he dutifully trudged to the store with his resident monster in tow.

"What else do I have to pick?"

The psychiatrist pulled the list the designer had made for Will from his pocket and glanced at it before putting it away. "Backsplash."

The brunette shifted Braelyn higher up and shook his head. "This is never going to end. We'll be trapped here and die like rats."

"You are exaggerating."

"I don't think I am. I think they put those windows in so they can taunt you when you realize there's no way out."

Hannibal didn't say anything to that. Instead, he simply moved around Will and gently led the younger man by the elbow to the tile section. Will rolled his eyes but allowed the motion, knowing that the other male was growing short on patience. It was very likely that he would need Hannibal again in the future during the renovation, so he bit back his annoyance and followed docilely.

"There are many different styles and colors to chose from. In the end, it comes down to personal taste."

It was both advise and warning about the upcoming section and Will rolled his eyes again at the dubious tone in the older man's voice, focusing on the multiple rows of tile before him. The sheer number of options was staggering and he felt a headache start to form at the prospect of having to look at them all. There was a particular expression on Hannibal's face that Will couldn't place but, considering the situation, it was possibly dread.

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"Seriously, I really don't understand why I have to update the house. It's fine the way it is."

Hannibal spoke without turning around, preoccupied with the many different types of clay and possible finishes. "It is fine for honeymooning couples, not a long-term family. It is only appropriate that you are allowed to make it look and feel the way you want."

"But that's just it," Will groused. "I like it the way it is! You and Celeste are the ones that want to update it. She made a remodel required before she'd sign the house over, so why am I the one paying for it?"

"As a reminder, William, I am paying for the appliances."

Will pointed a finger at the other man. "That's because I absolutely will not spend twelve thousand dollars on a fridge. If you want me to have an extra large, extra cold, extra expensive fridge when something from Lowe's will work just as well, then you bet your butt you're paying for it. What am I going to do with a sub-temperature fridge? What does that even mean?"

"Sub-Zero," Hannibal stressed, his voice strained, "and it is the brand name."

"Again, twelve thousand dollars for a fridge that I'm not going to even use."

The look Will received made him bite off the remainder of his opinion on the matter and grudgingly move on to the next tile display. Hannibal followed closely behind with what Will labeled as haughty disapproval and it made the back of his neck itch.

Braelyn shifted in agitation, her hands balling into tiny fists as she swung them around her head. Her face scrunched and Will glanced around for an escape, hoping to find a quiet place to calm her before the noise escalated into a full blown crying fit. He took a step towards an isolated corner but Hannibal stopped him by gently and efficiently lifting the baby out of the carrier and into his arms. Hannibal soothed BG quickly with soft caresses over her scalp and pats to her back and met Will's gaze several long moments after the infant was quiet once again.

"I will be using the kitchen and that is the point of it."

Will remained quiet as he observed Hannibal embracing their daughter, taken aback once again by the surreal sight. He nodded eventually, acknowledging the other man's comment, his irritation with the entire situation softening as they locked stares. Both men remained silent for a minute or two while Hannibal held BG.

"You're still not picking the countertops."

Hannibal tisked in annoyance and gave up, turning to wind his way through the remaining walls of tile. BG remained in his arms and Will smirked at the man's subtle maneuvering. He trailed behind, noting down any colors or designs he liked, while trying to commit that entire afternoon to a room in his slowly forming mental palace.

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